2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

341
123
415
769

(*a*) Elders of a Maximal Lineage assemble to sacrifice to their Founder.

The Maximal Lineage is a corporate unit: The elders of a maximal lineage, representing all its component segments, assemble to perform a sacrifice on the grave of one of their founding ancestors. Note that (a) only men are present; (b) the members of each segment sit together; (c) the close-packed form of the group, an index of the strong sense of lineage solidarity in such situations.

778
769

(*b*) Prayer preceding Sacrifice to Clan Founder.

An episode in the great sacrifice to Mosuor and the other founding ancestors, at Tongo, in 1936. Men of the sub-clan assembled at Mosuor's grave (stones in foreground) and tree shrine (baobab tree). The photograph was taken as the prayer preceding the sacrifice was being offered.

[facing p. 56]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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PLATE VIII

571
341
283
291

(*a*) The solidarity of clan sisters. During the funeral of the family head clan sisters of the widows, who have married into the same or adjacent clans, come to sit with them and console them.

361
415
252

(*b*) One of the senior clan-sisters (*pɔyayabɔlis*) of the deceased supervises the cooking of the beer for his funeral rites.

[FACING p. 161]

Like the tɛndaanas all the *tɔŋgbana* of Taleland, and even beyond Taleland, are described as 'kin' (*mabiis*) to one another. In principle, *tɛŋ*, the Earth, cannot be divided up; it is the tɛndaanaship which is distributed.

This explains the diversity and lack of precision one finds in the boundaries of tɛndaanas' *tɛs*. Like settlement boundaries they are determined by social rather than physical facts, though here and there conspicuous topographical features may be fixed upon as landmarks from which to take a bearing. Doo *tɛŋ*, the area immediately surrounding and including the supreme *tɔŋgban* Doo of Tɛnzugu, is an example of a tɛndaana's *tɛŋ* that can easily be distinguished. Homesteads on Doo *tɛŋ* [341] may not have roofs of thatch (*mopin*) but must have flat roofs (*bɛa*, vb.) of mud. This is a quasi-totemic taboo of this *tɛŋ* (cf. p. 142). Standing on the wall of granite boulders that overlooks this part of Tɛnzugu one can see where the mud roofs end and the thatched roofs begin. I was very reluctantly told about, and later shown, what purported to be the fixed physical boundaries of Doo *tɛŋ* by men of Kpata'ar, the clan which has ritual jurisdiction over it. A ditch, a line of large boulders, a prominent tree, a path, such were the landmarks by which they went. But the striking thing about this boundary was that, almost all the way, it followed the social boundaries between Kpata'ar and Gundaat on the one side, and between Bunkiuk and Samiit on the other. In the closely settled parts of the country, wherever *tɛndaanditib* clans are in occupation of the areas under their ritual jurisdiction, there is a noticeable tendency for the alleged physical boundaries of *tɛs* to coincide with social boundaries between clans or maximal lineages.

Settlements like Tongo, where people believed to be of immigrant descent occupy land under the ritual jurisdiction of other clans, are instructive. Tongo, like many other Tale settlements, stretches over the ritual territories of several tɛndaanas (cf. p. 169). The alleged boundaries between the *tɛs* of the Gbizug, Soog, and Zubiuŋ tɛndaanas run through Tongo. As the people of Tongo put it, these clans at various times allotted portions of their own land for Tongo people to build and farm on. Physical landmarks are pointed out as indicating these boundaries. But if they are examined it will be seen that they tend to coincide with the social boundaries between sections (*yizugɔt*) or between segments of sections (*dugɔt*). (See map at end of book.) Wherever part of a tɛndaana's boundary runs between homesteads of men of the same segment (*dug*), the homesteads (rarely more than one or two) on the wrong side of the boundary have not been sited there for more than a generation. The continual slow shifting about of homestead sites in a settlement through the course of generations is paralleled by a shifting of the boundaries between farm plots; for they pass through alternate phases of being divided up, wholly or in part, among the segments of a nuclear lineage that has reached a phase of fission, and of being reconstituted, wholly or in part, at a later stage of lineage integration. These internal adjustments often result in a spilling over of one section of a clan into what was till then regarded as the area of a neighbouring unit of like sort.

We lack historical documents; but we can infer from the contemporary dynamics of Tale social life that the boundaries of tɛndaanas' *tɛs* shift

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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PLATE XI

764
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137

(*a*) The grave of Tendaan Genɔt and the space believed to have been occupied by his homestead and Mosuor's, now the sacred dancing ground, Giŋgaaŋ Puhug, at Tongo. Note that it is not cultivated.

778
341

(*b*) A miniature homestead symbolizing the ancestral home of a maximal lineage or clan. Note the lineage *bɔyar* against the outside wall.

[FACING p. 224]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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PLATE XII

(*a*) The head of a medial lineage, Siiyɛŋ biis of Tongo, about to sacrifice to the lineage *bɔŋar* on formally taking over the headship of the lineage. The *bɔŋar* is in front of him in the broken pottery vessel.

(*b*) A sacrifice to the *dugni* (maximal lineage) *bɔŋar* of one of the component maximal lineages of Zubiiŋ. Only elders of the lineage are present.

[facing p. 225]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PLATE XIV

531
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782

(a) *Sunzop m-maan yela.* A Gbizug elder performs a ritual service for Zubiuŋ-Yakora by sewing the sheepskin loin cover for the dead at a funeral.

764
341
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301

(b) Elders representing all the component maximal lineages of Ba'ari assemble for the burial rites of the Ba'at-Sakpar tendaana at his homestead.

[facing p.241]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

decorate the walls, and stamping the floors into smooth, hard surfaces are all women's work. According to its size and the number of workers available, from the commencement to the final touches, it takes from three weeks to two months of intermittent but often strenuous labour to build a homestead. This falls chiefly on its future occupants. All the members of the family, including the children, lend a hand. But co-members of the owner's clan, especially of his own local segment and their wives, as well as kinsmen, affines, and friends, lend their services too, and this involves considerable expenditure of foodstuffs to reward them.

Again, substantial as they are, Tale houses are not impervious to the weather, with its drastic alternation of great heat and drought and heavy rains. After a couple of years the soaking rains of July and August begin to wear the walls away, rot the thatch, and pit the floors. A man who wants to keep his homestead in trim condition must do some repairs every dry season. New rooms may be added from time to time, if the family grows in numbers, or old rooms allowed to fall in if it diminishes. With such alterations and repairs, a homestead may stand for a generation. In the older settlements many sites have been occupied for two or three generations continuously, the homesteads having been completely rebuilt, bit by bit, several times during this period.

Building a new homestead is an outstanding event in the life of its owner and a matter of public attention. It always marks a significant change in a man's status—his economic and jural emancipation from minority, or his attainment of eldership high up in the lineage hierarchy. Hence it requires moral sanction and ritual precautions. As we have seen, it also mobilizes all the basic social ties a man has. The house itself, embodying the labour and care of himself, his family, and many of his relatives by blood and marriage, stands as a monument to the efficacy of these social ties.

We can see why the Tale homestead, looked at merely from the architectural aspect, is the material projection of the social relations that make up the domestic family. All Tale homesteads have the same architectural pattern, just as all Tale domestic families have the same basic structure. Only in one point of style and construction do Tale homesteads differ in type, and this is not a question of taste. The Tallensi have two kinds of roofs, a conical thatched roof lashed on to a frame of rafters, and a flat roof of beaten pile supported on a ceiling of strong rafters. The thatch roof is the easier to make and the most common. But nearly every thatched homestead has at least one flat-roofed room (*pii*), as a matter both of convention and of utility. It is the scene of many activities in the dry season. Men, women, and children sit or sprawl on the roof to rest, to chat, or when they are busy with some sedentary task such as sewing or spinning. Grain, vegetables, and edible leaves are spread out to dry there. On

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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sultry nights the head of the house often makes up his bed there. When his grain is ripening on the home farm he climbs on to the *pii* every morning to survey it, and often stands there to keep an eye open for stray animals likely to spoil it. There is always an ancestor shrine or two on the flat roof, as it is the appropriate place for a *yin* shrine in the earliest stage of its evolution; and it is from the flat roof that the alarm call, *yaahi! yaahi!* is broadcast when a death occurs or something untoward happens for which the immediate assistance of neighbours is needed.

But some homesteads must be flat-roofed throughout, though the cost in time and labour is great. For this is a taboo (*kihɔr*) of the Earth in some places. Almost all the senior tɛndaanas are therefore obliged to have all their rooms flat-roofed; and at Wakii and Tɛnzugu all houses within the acknowledged precincts of the principal Earth shrines (*tɔŋgbana*) of these places must be flat-roofed throughout. This affects the design and construction of the homestead in many details, but not in its basic pattern.

A homestead reveals much to the instructed eye. Its appearance and condition often betray the character, capabilities, social position, and experience of the owner and his wife or wives. The Golibdaana of Tɛnzugu and the Yikpɛmdaana of Gorogo each have a large rectangular room of sun-dried bricks, built for them by boys trained at the White Fathers' Mission at Bolɔga, and used as sanctum, private storeroom, and personal sleeping-quarters. They are both wealthy, ambitious, upstart headmen, whose political and economic privileges are wholly dependent on the white man's rule. Hence, though themselves illiterate and of the generation that reached maturity before British rule became established, they are 'progressives', alert to useful or merely pretentious innovations that add to their prestige or bolster up their self-assurance. The Tɔŋraana, or, to go outside Taleland, the Nangodi na'aba, wealthy men too in virtue of their political role under the British Administration, but deriving their authority from the native social structure, do not require adventitious props to their prestige. Their private rooms are built in native style, with the useful addition of a rough plank door fastened with a padlock. A plank door is a rarity in Taleland, and very hard to come by. If a room in a commoner's homestead is fitted with one, it may be inferred that some member of the family has been abroad a good deal or has close connexions with people who are or have been in Ashanti, in the Colony, or in European service.

Most Tallensi take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads. A dilapidated homestead indicates that its owner is poor or infirm or lazy, and therefore unable to provide the foodstuffs to recompense relatives who might be asked to help him repair it. A good-for-nothing like Yɛlnaar of Tɔŋ-Puhug has a tumbledown dwelling which his neighbours point to with scorn. A man of more self-respect would be

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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PLATE 12

603
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341

a. A grandfather with his son's children

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b. The effective minimal lineage: the father, his eldest son (working in the distance), his two small sons, and his two grandchildren out on the farm for the day

[facing p. 209]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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593

a. Children of a single domestic family. From left to right: Da'ano'o's child, his late father's child, his agnatic cousin's (i.e. classificatory brother's) child

593
341
531
415

b. Four generations. From left to right: Nyaagzum, his own mother with his infant son, his older (deceased) half-brother's son, who married his mother after his father's death and brought him up

[facing p. 272]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PLATE 16

782
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291
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a. The members of a segment of a maximal lineage gather at the homestead of the head of the segment to sacrifice to their immediate founding ancestor. 'Sisters' sons' of the segment have the right to be present. The sacrifice has been performed and the goat offered is now being divided up. The two 'sisters' sons' (nearest the camera, wearing caps) sit waiting for their portion of the meat. Note the active interest in the process of cutting up the goat taken by the members of the lineage, most of whom are standing up, by contrast with the passive interest of the 'sisters' sons' on the fringe

778
531

b. Matrilateral kin come to set up a new shrine (the mud cone against the wall, right background) for the grandmother of Pirbazza (extreme right)

[FACING p. 289]

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

105 THE DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION. Tale domestic institutions are very elaborate, and the organization of domestic life is subject to a considerable range of variation due to such factors as the economic position, size and age of the unit, the temperament and character of individuals, the social status of the senior male members, the distribution of economic and ritual specialization (craftsmen, diviners &c.), and so forth. To evaluate the full influence of these factors requires a mass of statistical information which we have not been able to obtain as yet; we must be content with merely indicating its range.

Tale society is essentially democratic; but differences of wealth are prominent. Chiefs and headmen, in virtue of the services they command, cultivate greater areas than any commoner, own much more live stock and have twice and three times as many wives. Both in its structure and in the organization of its domestic life, a chief's compound conforms to the same cultural pattern as the compound of the poorest plebeian; but it is economically entirely atypical. In every settlement, also, there are a few men of wealth considerably above the average. They always have a sufficiency of food, even in the leanest years. Chiefs, headmen, and wealthy men have therefore been excluded from the discussion in this paper.

592 596 341 Tale social organization has a well-defined spatial basis. The unit of residence is a mud compound (*yir*—house) inhabited by a joint family consisting of a group of men of close patrilineal kinship, their wives and children. Its architecture is significantly correlated to the structure and organization of the joint family at the particular phase it has reached in its development. One compound in three—14 out of 40, to be exact—has two or more entrance gateways (*zanor*),[1] each corresponding to a completely self-contained dwelling, and independent social unit consisting of one or more households. The plural entrance compound represents a stage in the process of segmentation through which the joint family passes in the course of about three generations, and which ends in complete fission and the setting up of several independent compounds.

592 596 The main gate is always owned by the head of the joint family (*yirdaan*, owner of the house) the most senior (*kpeem*) of the group of

[1] Statistics quoted here and in subsequent paragraphs are derived from a sample of 40 compounds selected at random from a sociological census we made at Tongo.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

Plate IV

524
291
341

Building Play. In the background a newly built room. On the right of the group a big boy demonstrating to a small boy. Behind them part of a 'house' they have finished. On the left, girls making the swish and explaining the process to the ethnographer's wife.

411
291
868

Learning Marksmanship. Note how intently the two smaller boys, who have only recently acquired real bows, are watching the technique of their older companion

[facing p. 49]